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RESEARCH ARTICLE

From 'mystic synthesis' to 'Jesuit plot': The Society of Jesus and the making of religious policy in Indonesia

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Abstract

Since the 1990s, Indonesia has been confronted with the growing influence of a radical Islamist movement that challenges the state doctrine (Pancasila), which was adopted in 1945, and demands a greater place for Islam, which is the religion of nearly 90 per cent of the population. The hardline groups wish to call into question the Indonesian state's pluralistic and inclusive religious identity, which they see as a conspiracy hatched by the Christian minority to deprive the Muslim majority of its ostensible rights. The Society of Jesus, which has been present in Java since the nineteenth century, is considered by Islamist critics as the main architect of this alleged plot. Furthermore, one of its members, Father Josephus Beek, is presented by Islamist radicals as one of the founders of the New Order (1966–1998), the regime led by General Suharto which was very hostile to political Islam in its early days. This article analyses how the Society of Jesus was able to integrate Catholicism into the Javanese spiritual landscape and explores the subsequent roles played by Jesuit leaders in the genesis and defence of Pancasila. It also sheds light on how Josephus Beek's very real manoeuvres have provided fodder for militant Islamist circles seeking to delegitimate Indonesia's secular status quo.

Keywords: Jesuits; Indonesia; Catholicism; Christian-Muslim relations

Introduction

On 23 January 1998, during Ramadan, President Suharto's son-in-law, General Prabowo Subianto, invited members of a radical Islamist organization, the Indonesian Committee for Solidarity with the Islamic World (Komite Indonesia untuk Solidaritas dengan Dunia Islam, KISDI) to break fast with him at the headquarters of Kopassus, the crack unit within the Indonesian army that he headed (Hefner 2000, 202). Prabowo was a diehard supporter of the ailing regime and, in the speech he gave that evening, he launched into a violent diatribe against 'the Chinese Indonesians and other enemies of Islam' who, according to him, were at the root of the existential threat faced by the

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incumbent regime.[1] As the leaders of the KISDI were leaving the event, Prabowo gave each of them a pamphlet entitled 'The Conspiracy to Overthrow Suharto' (*Konspirasi Mengguling Soeharto*) which laid out an analysis of the ongoing political and economic crisis. The document warned against a cabal composed of 'Jews, Jesuits and Mossad agents who control international capitalism' and who, in their attack on the Indonesian president, were targeting Muslims. It denounced in particular the presence of 'a coterie of Catholic Jesuit extremists' in the country and concluded by saying that 'the Muslim community must realize that in this country power cannot fall into the hands of Zionist agents and Islamophobic groups' (Mietzner 1999, 72). In the months following the gathering, this thesis of a Jesuit conspiracy bent on bringing both Indonesia and its main religion (practised by 88 per cent of the population) to its knees became very popular (for examples, see Husaini 2000, 111–112). It has since reappeared regularly in radical Islamist circles. Proponents of the thesis invariably point to the actions of the Jesuit priest Josephus Beek (1917–1983) as allegedly indisputable proof of the existence of such a 'Jesuit conspiracy'. In June 2020, for example, Djoko Edhi Abdurrahman, a former MP (2004–2009) belonging to the Partai Amanat Nasional (the National Mandate Party, PAN) interpreted the re-election of President Jokowi as a 'victory of "Pater Beek" over the Islamic movement'.[2]

One could content oneself with highlighting the inconsistencies in the above speeches and insist on the unstable personalities of those who pronounce them.[3] However, to do so would be to neglect a highly significant object of historical research—the figure of this Jesuit in the Islamist martyrological narrative—which enables one to further elucidate the complex evolution of Indonesia's religious identity. Apart from the denunciations of the radical Islamist press and a hagiography written by one of his colleagues (Soedarmanta 2008), scholars have also highlighted Father Josephus Beek's role in the founding of the authoritarian New Order regime.[4] However, no comprehensive study has been devoted to him. Without claiming to be able to fill this void, this article seeks to resituate his role in the history of the Society of Jesus in Indonesia and, more broadly, in that of the religious policy of the Indonesian state. It does so

[1]For a detailed account of this meeting, see *Media Dakwah*, February 1998, pp. 41–45.

[2]J. E. Abdurrahman, 'Jaringan Pemusnah Pater Beek Untuk Hancurkan Islam di Rezim 2 Jokowi Menguat', published online on 22 October 2019, https://www.teropongsenayan.com/106399-jaringan-pemusnah-pater-beek-untuk-hancurkan-islam-di-rezim-2-jokowi-menguat, [accessed 21 July 2022].

[3]Prabowo Subianto is a highly controversial figure with a murky past: he has been accused of crimes against humanity and grave violations of human rights. He has often come under investigation in his own country and was denied entry into the United States for a long period. His accusations concerning Jesuits who were behind a plot to overthrow the New Order regime is in contradiction with those made by radical Islamist groups who, on the contrary, have accused the Society of Jesus of supporting Suharto against Islam. Djoko Edhi Abdurrahman was expelled from the PAN and is today at the head of the improbable 'Khilafah 1000 Years Foundation'. As proof of the enormous influence wielded by 'Beek's network' (despite the fact that he has been dead for 37 years), he has cited the fact that Prabowo himself, who stood against Jokowi during the last election, eventually joined the latter's government.

[4]Due to its hagiographic character, the work of his Jesuit colleague J. B. Soedarmanta (2008) should, in my opinion, be considered more as a primary source, albeit a very rich one, than as a genuinely academic study. Several other authors, however, have rigorously examined certain aspects of Joop Beek's remarkable role in Indonesian Jesuitism in their writings: Mujiburrahman 2006, 134–145; Schütte 2013, 151–176; Wertheim 1979; Bourchier 2015, 167–186; Steenbrink 2015, 18–20; Tanter 1991.

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based, in part, on an exploration of archival sources, most notably Josephus Beek's file in the archives of the Jesuit Province of Indonesia (kept in Semarang) as well as documents kept by Jesuit Father Adolphe Heuken (who shared the same house as Beek and investigated his activities).

To understand why a small religious congregation, which never comprised more than 300 members in Indonesia, finds itself on top of an Islamist blacklist, alongside Mossad and the CIA, one needs first of all to go back to the opening decades of the twentieth century. At that time in the principalities of Central Java, a subtle religious compromise was teased out between Muslim identity, Javanese spirituality, and European modernity, which in 1945 would be enshrined as 'the Belief in One Almighty God' in the first principle of the Pancasila, the official ideology of the newly independent republic. As the main leaders of the Javanese Catholic community, the Jesuits naturally participated both politically and intellectually in the adoption and consolidation of this religious settlement. In the 1950s, they were close to Masyumi, the main Muslim party, with whom they shared an anti-communist position and whom they encouraged to adopt a more open conception of Pancasila. But the repression of this party, from 1958 onwards, led to a hardening of its ideology in the late 1960s and, in their eyes, gave Father Joop's (as he was commonly known) actions a particular resonance. Although very marginalized within the Society of Jesus, his actions gave rise to the Jesuit conspiracy theory which was one of the cornerstones of radical Islamic martyrology in Indonesia.

The Jesuit contribution to Pancasila

Adopted at the time of the proclamation of independence in 1945, the official Indonesian ideology enshrines as the first of its five principles (Pancasila) 'the Belief in One Almighty God' (*Ketuhanan yang Maha Esa*) as the foundation of the Indonesian state.[5] Unlike most Muslim-majority countries which, at the time of their independence, had to choose urgently and sometimes painfully between a secularized regime and the adoption of Islam as the state religion, Indonesia is one of the rare cases in which in-depth political debates were held on the relationship between religion and the state.[6] This solution, which was unprecedented in the Muslim world, led to the foundation of a religious, but not an Islamic, state.[7] It prevailed despite the reservations of a part of the Muslim nationalist movement, not only as a way to take

[5]'Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa' has been translated into English in many different ways: 'Divine Omnipotence' (Sidjabat 1965, 20); 'The Being of Supreme Deity' (Kafrawi 1956a); 'Oneness of God' (Kafrawi 1956b). Until the end of the 1980s the most frequent official translation was 'Belief in God' (Yayasan Proklamasi 1978); 'Belief in the One and Only God' seems to be the new official translation. As was rightly noted by Darmaputera (1988, 153), 'God' is Allah in Indonesian, a particular God of Islam and Christianity. 'Tuhan' is 'Lord' in English. The prefix 'ke' and the suffix '-an' denote an abstract idea or a concept. So, the correct way to translate 'Ketuhanan' is 'Lordship'. The word *Maha*, from Sanskrit, means 'great', 'abundant', or 'mighty'. *Esa* is also from Sanskrit and means 'existence', but in Malay and Indonesian it has taken on the meaning of 'one'. So, a more literal translation of 'Ketuhanan Yang Maha Esa' could be 'belief in the great one Lordship'.

[6]See Boland (1982) and Noer (1978) on these debates in Indonesia, and Kepel (2003) and Bayart (2010) for comparisons with other Muslim countries.

[7]Despite an overwhelming Muslim majority: in the 2010 Indonesian census, 87.18 per cent of Indonesians identified themselves as Muslims (Sunnis comprised more than 99 per cent, Shias

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into account the religious equilibrium of the archipelago (the Christian community constitute a majority in the east of the country) but also because it reflected a Javanese conception of religion deeply rooted among those nationalists who were 'religiously neutral'.[8]

The origins of this very open conception of religiosity which respected minority traditions can be traced back to the eighteenth century in the Javanese kingdom of Mataram. This kingdom emerged as an Islamized successor state to the Hindu-Buddhist empire of Madjapahit and it permitted the appearance of a 'mystic synthesis' (Ricklefs 2006), in which the Islamic identity of the Javanese was affirmed but not to the exclusion of other religions. Islamic practices developed there incorporated pre-existing local devotional elements. Subsequent to the colonization of Java and from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, this spiritual legacy lived on in the two principalities (*vorstenlanden*) of Surakarta (Solo) and Yogyakarta, where vestiges of the Mataram kingdom were tolerated by the Dutch authorities. In the first decades of the twentieth century, these two towns became remarkable places of spiritual emulation: the Javanese 'mystic synthesis' was challenged both by an Islamic reformist movement and by a European form of modernity (Ricklefs 2007). In Yogyakarta and Solo, numerous religious communities (Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, Christians, Theosophists, and Javanese mystics) lived side by and thus helped to foster the idea that being modern meant being inspired by religious pluralism. The overlapping of religious identities—one could be Muslim and a theosophist, or Christian and an adept of Javanese mysticism—foreshadowed the approach of the future Indonesian state.

The Society of Jesus, which had been implanted in Central Java since 1896, was one of the architects of this extraordinary spiritual diversity but also of its political ramifications. Catholics had been in a minority within the Christian community up until then and the Jesuits had only been present on a few islands in the eastern part of the archipelago (the vestiges of the Portuguese colony) and in the colonial cities.[9] In the opening decade of the twentieth century, they managed to put down roots in a mountainous region on the fringes of the Yogyakarta sultanate, one of the principalities to which the Dutch had sparingly accorded a few nominal powers. The Jesuit Franciscus

0.5 per cent, Ahmadis, 0.2 per cent), 6.96 per cent as Protestants, 2.91 per cent as Catholics, 1.69 per cent as Hindus, 0.72 per cent as Buddhists, 0.05 per cent as Confucianists, 0.13 per cent as other, and 0.38 per cent unstated or were not asked.

[8]'*Netral agama*', as they are referred to by scholars (Noer 1996, 267–271).

[9]After a short but promising moment of expansion in the eastern part of Indonesia, marked by the figure of Francis Xavier (one of the founders of the Society of Jesus) who spent two years in the Moluccas (1546–1547), Catholicism had been deprived of its initially Portuguese (since 1605) and then Spanish (since 1663) protectors, and was subsequently forbidden altogether by the Dutch East India Company (VOC, 1602–1799), whose representatives were dominated by Calvinists (Heuken 2002). The Catholic community in the Moluccas as well as in Minahasa and the Sangir Islands in the north of Sulawesi was then authoritatively converted to Calvinism. All representatives of the Catholic clergy were officially banished from the Dutch Indies until 1808. Only the island of Flores and a part of Timor, which remained under Portuguese control, were able to maintain their Catholic population and contacts with Rome (Aritonang and Steenbrink 2008, 3–137). In the Dutch East Indies, the Catholic Church was permitted to hold services publicly again in 1808 and developed only very slowly outside its strongholds in the east of the archipelago (Steenbrink 2003). The Jesuits were back in 1863 but initially focused their efforts on the large colonial cities of Java. It was only in 1886 that they came into contact with the Muslims on the margins of the *vorstenlanden* of Central Java.

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van Lith (1863–1926) was one of the driving forces behind the first wave of conversions in this Muslim stronghold and he developed his strategy by learning from the Protestant mission's spectacular failure in the region a few years earlier.[10] Rather than attempting to impose a very European and exclusive version of Christianity, as the Indishe Kerk (Church of the Indies) had, he adopted the more flexible and inclusive posture of the *guru nglemu*, the Javanese spiritual master. By showing himself to be extremely tolerant towards Javanese beliefs and practices, he was proposing, to a certain extent, a new version of the old mystic synthesis in which Catholicism replaced Islam as the nominal religion, thus admitting a broad degree of spiritual diversity (Madinier 2011). He defended, for example, the right of the few hundred new converts to Catholicism to participate in *slametan* (Javanese traditional religious ceremonial meals during which prayers for the ancestral spirits of a village are pronounced). He also tolerated the conflation of certain Hindu or local goddesses with Biblical figures, such as the suggestion that Dewi Sri, the goddess of rice and fertility, could be likened to the Virgin Mary. He considered that identifying Jesus Christ with Ratu Adil, the 'Just King' worshipped by Javanese millenarian movements, could constitute 'a magnificent starting point from which to announce the good news of the coming of Jesus Christ' (Van Lith 1924, 53). This identification was an eminently desirable one since Ratu Adil had often previously been conflated with the Prophet Muhammed. Although severely criticized by most of his colleagues in Java, Van Lith's positions were part of a much older tradition, present in the Society of Jesus since its foundation. Following Matteo Ricci (1552–1610) in China and Roberto de Nobili (1577–1656) in India, Jesuit missionaries tried to define an approach to inculturate Christianity in local spiritual cultures, later defined as the '*accommodatio*' doctrine and often defined by a phrase attributed to Ignatius of Loyola: 'enter through the other's door to get him out by his own' (Ganty 2002, 126). Its implementation sparked major debates, called the 'Rites controversy', which led to its condemnation in 1704 by Pope Clement XI. During the first decades of the twentieth century, the papacy moved slowly towards a more flexible position concerning what was later known as 'inculturation' and Van Lith benefitted from the support of his superiors in Rome against the local hierarchy.

If Indonesian memory glorified the insertion of Catholicism into the Javanese spiritual tradition, the primary cause of the rise of this community (and thus of its influence) was in fact the privileged access to colonial modernity offered by the teaching dispensed by the Jesuits. The inclusive approach adopted by Van Lith was all the more noticed by the future Indonesian elite due to the fact that he had by that time become renowned for having succeeded in transforming a modest missionary school into a reputable establishment subsidized by the colonial government. This school attracted to Muntilan the scions of the noble and rich families of the surrounding cities (Yogyakarta, Solo, Klate, and Magelang) and subsequently offshoot schools were opened in the neighbouring principalities. By 1917, two of his Jesuit brothers had opened a school in Yogyakarta with the help of the local aristocracy and the sultan, and soon others were to follow. In 1934, the *vorstenlanden* of Yogyakarta already counted 110 Jesuit schools, while Surakarta had more than 40 (Haryono 2009, 145).

[10]Taking advantage of his long stay in the Netherlands for health reasons between 1921 and 1924, he wrote a manuscript on this experience, a typewritten copy of which can be found in the Jesuit archives in Semarang (Van Lith 1924).

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This marked growth of schools anchored Catholicism firmly in the Javanese spiritual landscape. K. H. Ahmad Dahlan, the founder of the sizeable Muslim reformist organization, Muhammadiyah, paid several visits to Muntilan and met with Father van Lith (Fadjar 2009). He encouraged the members of his own organization to look to Van Lith's teaching methods for inspiration and he reformed the organization's schools so that they could integrate the Dutch education system, just like the Society's schools. This illustrates the extent to which spiritual fluidity and experimentation imbued the atmosphere at the time in that region. The prestige of a Jesuit education also brought about a sociological transformation within Indonesian Catholicism, turning it into an influential religion which now enrolled pupils from among the minor nobility in the princely court. This brought about a further shift concerning the level of political involvement of the Catholic community. Here again, the Jesuits played a vital role as they realized that simply implanting their religion in the Javanese universe would not be enough. In order to secure the nascent community's future, and to buttress the influence of the church, they would have to add a political dimension to their religious commitment.

Two distant relatives, Fathers Jan and Leopold van Rijckevorsel, were members of the Society of Jesus who played an essential part in setting this transformation in motion. In 1923, they encouraged several Muntilan alumni to found a Catholic Javanese Union for Political Action (Soedarmanta 2011, 66–68). This organization gradually broke away from Dutch control and joined the nationalist camp. They were inspired to do so by the progressive ideas of Van Lith who had made his entry into the world of politics in 1918 when he was nominated as the church's representative on the commission for the revision of the Dutch East Indies Constitution, created by the governor general, van Limburg-Stirum. While serving on the commission, he developed friendships with Agus Salim and Hasan Jayadiningrat, two prominent figures within the Sarekat Islam (Muslim Union), the main organization of political Islam at that time. As he explained in a letter to Cardinal van Rossum, prefect of the Propaganda Fide (Vatican Department for the Evangelization of Peoples), his time spent with the leaders of an organization denouncing 'the Christian religion as the oppressors' had convinced him that the mortal danger threatening the future of Catholicism could only be avoided if the church 'clearly chose which side it was on by rallying the indigenous movement' (Van Klinken 1997). Van Lith's ideas had received very little attention before he decided to publish them himself while on leave in the Netherlands for health reasons. In 1922, he submitted what he considered to be his political testament for publication in two successive editions of *Studien*, the Jesuit periodical in the Netherlands. A few months later, the two articles were published together in an opuscule which received a considerable amount of attention. With his freedom of speech and his willingly provocative tone towards his compatriots, the Jesuit denounced the three centuries of Dutch colonization which, until the dawn of the twentieth century, had been based on an 'oppressor-oppressed relationship'. The assimilation of Christianity by the colonial power having considerably tarnished the image of this religion in the Archipelago, he invited the Dutch Catholics (in the colony and in the Netherlands) to support the project of an autonomous government in the Indies (Van Lith 1923). Soekarno, the leading nationalist figure, cited the work at length during his trial in Bandung in 1930 and characterized Van Lith as a 'sincere scholar' (Soekarno 2019, 97–133). The Society of Jesus was then undeniably a part of the spiritual, cultural, and political dynamic

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which led to the formulation of the first principle of Pancasila by Soekarno on 1 June 1945, a few weeks after the proclamation of independence.

Although the founder and first president of the Republic of Indonesia grew up in Surabaya, in the east of Java, and not in the *vorstenlanden*, he was a perfect representative of this modernized version of the mystical synthesis that flourished in the principalities of Central Java. Soekarno's grandfather had been initiated into Javanese mysticism, his father into Islam and theosophy, while his Balinese mother had been brought up surrounded by Buddhism and Hinduism. He was also influenced by the ideas formulated by modernist Islamic thinkers such as Muhammad Abduh and Jamal al-Din al Afghani, whom he discovered during his stay in Surabaya with H. O. S. Tjokroaminoto, at that time the leader of Sarekat Islam. Finally, he completed his spiritual education during his exile between 1934 and 1938 on the Catholic majority island of Flores, where he forged excellent relations with the missionaries of the Society of the Divine Word which had taken on the Jesuits' role on this largely Catholic island.[11] According to him, it was in Ende, under the shade of a breadfruit tree where he was meditating, that he sketched the outlines of the five principles (*panca sila*) which were to become the ideological foundation of the Republic of Indonesia. The spiritual vision, which 'inspired' Soekarno on the day he delivered his famous speech of June 1945, later called 'the Birth of Pancasila', was thus the product of a complex religious legacy perfectly represented by the personal experience of the founding father of the Republic of Indonesia. In this speech, delivered before the assembly appointed by the Japanese (who had been occupying the Dutch Indies since 1942) to prepare for independence, Soekarno proposed to adopt five founding principles gathered under the term 'Pancasila' (Bonneff 1980).[12] The most important was undoubtedly the *Ketuhanan yang maha esa* principle—'the Belief in One Almighty God'—which reflected a deep-rooted religious sentiment. Soekarno's proposal was based upon emancipating Indonesia from the Dutch colonial legacy which was closely associated with European secularism while at the same time subtly remaining at a slight remove from Islam. The Muslim religion was recognized by Soekarno to be part of a spiritual legacy which included other beliefs and could not lay claim to any exclusive status. The blueprint attracted opposition from the representatives of political Islam who were in a minority. A new compromise was reached within a few weeks whereby

> the State of Indonesia, which is to be established as the State of the Republic of Indonesia with sovereignty of the people and based on the Belief in One Almighty God, *with the obligation to abide by Islamic law for adherents of Islam*, on just and civilized humanity, on the unity of Indonesia and on democratic rule that is guided by the strength of wisdom resulting from deliberation, so as to realize social justice for all the people of Indonesia (Boland 1982, 243, emphasis in original).

[11]The Society of the Divine Word (Societas Verbi Divini, SVD), a Roman Catholic missionary religious congregation, had been founded in the Netherlands in 1875.

[12]These five principles were nationalism (*Kebangsaan*), internationalism or humanism (*Perikemanusiaan*), democracy by consensus (*Permyusawaratan*), social prosperity (*Kesejahteraan sosial*), and belief in one God (*Ketuhanan*). A few weeks later, the 'belief in one God' became the first of Pancasila's principles.

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This new formulation, later known as the Jakarta Charter, thus provided for the application of sharia law for Muslims, which worried the country's Christian communities who feared an erosion of their rights and a decline into second-class citizenship. They were saved in the final instance by the country's geographical disposition. On 17 August 1945, the day Indonesia's independence was proclaimed by Soekarno and Mohammad Hatta, the latter received a visit from an officer of the Japanese navy who warned him that the majority Christian islands in the east of the archipelago would refuse to be part of the future independent state if the constitutional arrangement was not altered (Hatta 1970, 66).[13] On 18 August, a few hours before the meeting that was supposed to finalize the principles of the new constitution, Soekarno and Hatta assembled the country's main Muslim leaders who agreed to relinquish their demands 'in order to safeguard the sacred unity of the nation'.[14] The famous 'seven words' of the Jakarta Charter disappeared both from the preamble and from Article 29, and the first principle of Pancasila was definitively formulated as '*Ketuhanan yang Maha Esa*' (Belief in One Almighty God).

This formulation could, at first sight, appear as a major concession to the Muslim concept of divine uniqueness (*tawhid*) to which Islam attached so much importance. However, by choosing to express this notion in Sanskrit (*maha esa*), the sacred language of Hinduism, instead of Indonesian-Malay, the language of Islamization, the drafters enshrined the principle of a multidenominational country.[15] This refusal to cede to any temptation towards religious exclusivity was confirmed a few years later in 1950 when the Republic of Indonesia officially adopted its coat of arms.[16] The concessions made by the leaders of political Islam to the Javanese mystical synthesis were made at a price, though, as the hope of a 're-Islamization' of Pancasila resurfaced at regular intervals in the following decades (Fogg 2019, 138–140). For the time being, however, the country's religious minorities enjoyed a status which was unique in the Islamic world and paved the way for the recognition of their equality in a state where almost nine citizens out of every ten were Muslims.

The Jesuits' commitment to an inclusive Pancasila

Javanese Catholics and their Jesuit protectors, then, inherited a very favourable compromise in which they had played only an indirect role. The driving force behind the new arrangement was the Muslim nationalists—the 'religiously neutral' nationalists who, like Soekarno, forged an institutional equivalent of the mystical synthesis which

[13]This step was later considered by the Islamists as the symbol of the Christians' betrayal.

[14]In the words of Wahid Hasjim, president of the large traditionalist Muslim organization Nahdlatul Ulama (Boland 1982, 35).

[15]After a long history, six religions were officially recognized in Indonesia by the Ministry of Religions: Islam, Protestantism, Catholicism, Hinduism, and Confucianism. This recognition, in the name of the principle 'Ketuhanan yang Maha Esa' (Belief in One Almighty God), imposed on Buddhism, and especially on Hinduism, an extraordinary number of theological hoops (Picard 2011).

[16]Pride of place was given to the star representing Islam in the centre of the shield, surrounded by four symbols, each representing one of Pancasila's principles. The eagle Garuda carrying the heraldry, however, was Vishnu's sacred mount, and it recalls, along with the nation's motto (*Bineka tungal Ika*) held in the eagle's claws and written in Sanskrit, both the long-standing and the important place of Hinduism in the country's heritage.

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they had inherited. Nonetheless, the Jesuits embraced this composite religious identity which was subsequently officially enshrined and they spared no energy in defending it. The first stage in this defence took place during the period known as the 'Physical Revolution' corresponding to the four years after the proclamation of independence when the Republic of Indonesia fought against Dutch attempts to regain control over their one-time colony. Two of Van Lith's disciples in particular distinguished themselves during this period and, by freeing Indonesian Catholics from Dutch authority, their struggle thus ensured them a place in the new nation. The Jesuit Soegijapranata, appointed vicar apostolic of Semarang (Central Java) in 1940, abandoned his episcopal see in February 1947 when Dutch troops took over from the allies and rallied Yogyakarta which had become the capital of the new republic. This *hijrah* appears in Jesuit writings as a key moment in the history of Indonesian Catholicism.[17] By leaving the Europeanized town of Semarang, where the seat of the apostolic vicariate had been established in order to avoid provoking any tension with the Muslim sovereigns of the Central Javanese principalities, the young indigenous bishop had symbolically severed the ties linking the Indonesian church to the colonial authorities. Upon his arrival in the new capital, he quickly rallied around the new government and its cause, without worrying about the effect this might have on his Dutch co-religionists. He even acted as a figure of doctrinal authority alongside Soekarno, in the same vein as the spiritual advisers to Javanese kings (Van Klinken 2003, 185). Another figure who carried on the legacy of Van Lith was I. J. Kasimo (one of his former students and founder of the Indonesian Catholic party) who helped to keep the republican government alive during the 'second police operation' in mid-December 1948 when Dutch troops invaded the republican-held territory of Central Java. At the time, he was minister of supply, and was one of the rare members of government not to have been arrested. After a dramatic escape from the republican capital in extraordinary circumstances, he managed to make it to a remote mountainous area where he took part in the creation of an emergency government (Soedarmanta 2011, 139–149). To a certain extent the commitment of Catholic leaders to the nationalist cause was the political illustration of the first principle of Pancasila, heralding a nation where each religion would contribute to defending it in the name of shared spiritual values. Once independence had been secured, the Jesuits' pen continued the battle which had begun with the sword.

The main instrument of this intellectual contribution to Pancasila was the monthly publication *Basis*, founded by the Jesuits in Yogyakarta in 1951 and for a long time the country's main cultural and intellectual magazine. It was inspired by their Dutch brothers' periodical *Studien*, and from its first edition, it set out the scope of its ambition: to contribute to the resolution of problems which had been 'until then solved by others' but which the young nation now needed to tackle. In order to properly enlighten its leaders in a wide range of areas—social problems, education, family, health, history, literature, etc.—this general studies monthly magazine set as its objective the enlightenment of public debate thanks to this 'basis, this unitary, profound and ultimate basis which is one God who created the Universe and gives a specific goal to every existing thing'.[18] Two members of the Society of Jesus in particular came to

[17] The use of the term *hijrah* (in reference to Muhammad's departure from Mecca to Medina in AD 622) by the Jesuit A. Budi Susanto testifies to the inclusive nature of this story (Budi Susanto 1990).

[18] *Basis*, first editorial, October 1951.

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prominence through this Catholic exegesis of Pancasila. The first was the Dutchman Jan Bakker (1919–1978), who generally wrote under the pen name Rahmat Soebagya. He was an ardent supporter of the doctrinal foundation of the young republic, to which he attributed almost miraculous powers such as 'allowing everyone to emancipate themselves and attain a sort of perfection', 'delineating the highest possible form of humanity', or even 'constituting a bulwark against totalitarianism' (Soebagya 1952b). Pancasila, he explained in another article, should not be viewed as a political concept but rather as 'the result of contemplation by the very soul of Indonesia' (Soebagya 1952a). Bakker, like his Jesuit brothers, insisted on the unity formed by the five principles, while pointing out the centrality of the first principle, the Belief in One Almighty God. In this respect, Indonesia was supposed to act as an example for the rest of the world. Bakker recommended that the United Nations take inspiration from Indonesian national ideology so as to ensure a proper place for God in its founding principles (Soebagya, 1952c). The second Jesuit who become known for his stout defence of Pancasila was the Javanese Nicolaus Driyarkara (1913–1967). In 1947, he became the first native priest to be ordained in Indonesia, and when a few weeks later Mgr Soegijapranata went into exile in republican territory, he duly followed him. Driyarkara was raised on the writings of major contemporary Catholic thinkers such as the Jesuits Daniélou, de Lubac, and Rahner as well as the foremost Christian existentialist philosopher Gabriel Marcel. He was also well versed in the ideas of Indonesian nationalist figures such as Soekarno, Hatta, Yamin, and Abdulgani as well as in Javanese classical literature. Driyarkara was one of the prime movers behind the Jesuits' adoption of a new dynamic form of Catholic nationalism, unburdened by the complex of a colonial religion. He left behind a considerable body of work (Sudiarja 2006) and the diary he kept between 1941 and 1950 reveals how his ideas gradually matured, from his break with Dutch utopian socialism during the war (particularly during his stay in Maastricht) to the formulation of a vigorous defence of Pancasila (Danuwinata 1990). His interpretation gained him some renown and led to his being invited in February 1959 to participate in a government seminar on national ideology. The speech he gave there in the presence of President Soekarno emphasized the links between religion and Pancasila, and he attributed to them both a common goal of making mankind more socially active and ultimately bringing about fraternal unity (Driyarkara 1959, 2006). This interpretation was taken as a form of homage to the *gotong-royong* principle of traditional village solidarity which Soekarno had highlighted when he put forward his idea of guided democracy. Indeed, the day after Driyarkara's speech, having dissolved the Constitutional Assembly, the regime appropriated the speech and the Ministry of Home Affairs distributed its transcript widely.

One of the most striking elements of the many analyses laid out in *Basis* by Driyarkara and a few other Jesuits was how rarely they referred to Catholic doctrine. This intentional toning down of the periodical's religious identity can be explained by the desire to find common ground with the Muslim community, or at least with some of its representatives. Christian and Muslim leaders were already united by being very strongly anti-communist, which allowed for their close collaboration in parliament between 1948 and 1957. The idea was to encourage the latter to follow the model of the Jesuit thinkers who had abandoned any attempt at interpreting Pancasila through an exclusively Catholic lens. Since the end of the 1940s, the main vehicle for political Islam, the Masyumi Party, had also begun a bold move in this

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direction. Having renounced any demand for an Islamic state, it set about modernizing and secularizing its programme and continued to do so right up until the elections of 1955.[19] This transformation did not occur smoothly and, indeed, the conservative wing of the party spoke out against what it saw as an abandonment of its Muslim identity and nurtured the hope that the Jakarta Charter would be reinstated. Throughout the 1950s, these internal debates attracted the scrutiny of *Basis* in a way that no other party's affairs did (not even the Catholic party). Numerous articles were published on the topic, revealing the close attention the periodical paid to the Muslim party's daily newspaper *Abadi*, and its weekly publication *Hikmah*. They examined the struggle between two factions: 'a conservative Muslim group still very attached to its moral values and to polygamy' (the latter was often seen as an indicator of conservatism) and 'a progressive Muslim group who fought it [polygamy] alongside other religions' (Soebagya 1952b). The Muslim party's congress and the speeches given there by its main leaders were often reported in great detail. Any dissension between party leaders deemed to be progressive—Mohammad Hatta, Mohammad Roem, and Yusuf Wibsono, for example—and those considered as more intransigent—in particular, Isa Anshary, the volatile Masyumi leader from West Java—was scrupulously noted. In short, the Jesuits offered to accompany Masyumi fraternally but vigilantly in its gradual renouncement of religious exclusivism. This strategy was in keeping with the goodwill that reigned in the parliament between the main Muslim party, the Catholic party, and the Protestant party, all three united in their fight against communism.[20] However, the Jesuits' commitment to the progressive wing of the Masyumi caused deep resentment among representatives of the more conservative faction. Relatively muted in the 1950s, their criticism of Christians in general and of the Jesuits in particular became sharper after Soekarno banned the party in 1960 and Suharto marginalized its former leaders.

The Jesuits ensnared by the ideologization of Pancasila

For the Catholic community, the Golden Age of their integration into the Indonesian nation corresponds to the country's first experiment in parliamentary democracy, from 1950 to 1957. Under the joint guidance of an urban nationalist elite, within which Catholics were extremely well represented, and of the supporters of an enlightened form of Islam, moderate and tolerant, with whom Catholics enjoyed close links, Indonesia embraced in one swoop a form of political modernity for which very few of its citizens were prepared. A large number of Catholics were highly qualified professionally and had received a European-style education, which made them the perfect representatives of this narrow, like-minded elite which fleshed out the institutional political and religious compromises that guided the nation's path in the decade following the Revolution. The Jesuits were the 'organic intellectuals' of this new

[19] In early September 1955, the party published a 55-point programme which contained no reference to the Muslim religion with the aim of convincing both 'religiously neutral' Muslims and non-Muslim minorities (Madinier 2015, 300–304).

[20] The Masyumi was generally considered to be the foremost political party in Indonesia as it brought together almost all Muslim organizations, both reformist and traditionalist. When Nahdlatul Ulama split in 1952 to form its own party, Masyumi was considerably weakened as shown in the election results of 1955.

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Catholic class and their expertise as intermediaries as well as their editorial muscle meant that they occupied a prominent position within it.

However, in a country whose population was essentially rural (90 per cent) and predominantly illiterate (two-thirds of the adult population), the consensus that had been hammered out in the cities fell largely on deaf ears. This is hardly surprising when one considers that only around 3 per cent of Indonesians had regular access to the press (Ricklefs 2001, 290). Starting in the late 1950s, a populist movement which thrived on this gap between elites and the popular masses sparked off a series of crises which flared up in the country and threated the relative harmony that Pancasila had enabled. The first crisis, which was political in nature, was caused by the volatility of the coalition governments formed by the parties in the provisional parliament/assembly where there had been six different administrations in the space of six years. Far from resolving this problem, as was hoped, the 1955 elections entrenched it even further politically, revealing an electorate divided into four main parties incapable of finding any lasting common ground.[21] When it came to revising the Constitution, debate in the constitutional assembly quickly foundered, turning the political crisis into an institutional one. Rattled by what they considered to be an electoral defeat in 1955, Masyumi, which had considered itself, up until that point, to be the biggest party in Indonesia, hardened its position and called into question the validity of the religious compromise that had been adopted in 1945, demanding, with the support of the other Muslim parties, the recognition of 'a state founded on Islam'. Although the Muslim group within the assembly was outnumbered, they had a blocking minority which meant that those in favour of preserving Pancasila as the sole foundation of the state (among which was the Catholic party) did not make up the two-thirds majority required to include it in a new constitution (Nasution 1992). President Soekarno, who had been lamenting for years the modest powers attributed to his office under the provisional constitution of 1950, seized on this political and institutional impasse to gain the upper hand. In October 1956, he called upon his fellow Indonesians to recognize the failure of a Western-style democracy in Indonesia and to support his proposal to establish in its place a 'guided democracy' (*demokrasi terpimpin*) which would be better tailored to the country's needs. He gradually succeeded in imposing a series of reforms that established a new type of authoritarian regime based on the institutional embodiment of the notion of '*gotong royong*', a mutual and reciprocal assistance, as in the traditional Javanese villages, which was supposed to enable the country to transcend its political and social conflicts (Feith 1963, Bowen 1986). Pancasila was then transformed into a constraining ideology whose narrow interpretation served as a justification for the political elimination of any opposition. In 1959, Soekarno decided to dissolve the assembly and to forcibly reintroduce the 1945 Constitution. The following year, he invoked the need to defend Pancasila in order to outlaw the Masyumi Party and the small Socialist Party of Indonesia (PSI), the only two parties that had

[21] In the legislative elections, the PNI (Partai Nasional Indonesia, close to Soekarno) gained 22 per cent of the votes, the Masyumi 21 per cent, the Partai Nahdlatul Ulama, representing traditionalist Islam, 18 per cent, and, finally, the PKI (Partai Komunis Indonesia), 16 per cent. The Christian parties obtained 2.6 per cent for the Parkindo (Protestant) and 2 per cent for the Catholic parties. The results of the Constituent Assembly elections, held a few weeks later, were more or less the same. For an analysis of these elections and the divisions they revealed in Indonesian society, see Teik 1972.

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openly opposed Soekarno's authoritarian drift. The other parties lost any political influence they had, with the notable exception of the Communist Party of Indonesia (PKI). From 1956 to 1957, the conditions which had allowed the political influence of the Catholic community to flourish (a broad consensus over a system of parliamentary democracy founded on Pancasila) progressively disappeared and the internal tensions within Indonesian society accumulated. This eventually led, between 1965 and 1966, to a radical regime change with which a Jesuit, Father Joop Beek, was closely associated.

A Jesuit founder of the New Order?

Rarely has a figure in Indonesian history nourished as many rumours, fantasies, and divergent interpretations as Josephus 'Joop' Beek. He drew appraisals that were rarely nuanced: for some he was a hero of the struggle against communism and a respected leader of a Catholic youth movement which aimed to reconcile the desire to affirm a religious identity with that of occupying a prominent place in the Indonesian nation; for others he was the founder of a Catholic Freemasonry who had compromised himself with the New Order dictatorship; for many Islamist activists he was the driving force behind a vast conspiracy to eradicate Islam from Indonesia with the help of the United States' CIA. No authoritative study has ever been made of this provocative figure who, beyond the rumours, hagiographies, and pamphlets, has remained relatively unknown, despite the important role he played in the beginnings of the New Order.

Born in 1917 in Holland into a very conservative Catholic family which had provided the priesthood with at least one other of its members, he would have grown up listening to the heroic tales of missionaries recounted in the Jesuit publication *Claverbond* (Soedarmanta 2008, 21). He entered the Jesuit seminary in Maariendal in 1935 and in 1937 moved to the Dutch Indies where he was influenced by the 'Van Lith method' which had just been integrated into the Jesuits' missionary approach. While voicing his reservations about the religiously heterodox opinions of the Muntilan missionary, Beek adopted his audacity and dynamism. On top of these qualities, during his time in Japanese internment camps he demonstrated an obsession with physical and psychological fortitude that would later typify his action as a combative missionary. In 1952, he was charged by his religious superior with opening a Catholic boarding school, Realino, in Yogyakarta and turning it into a laboratory for the bold elitist policy that was to make him one of the most influential figures in the country by the late 1960s. Pupils wishing to be admitted were submitted to a rigorous system of selection, based not only on their academic results but also on their charisma and physical attributes. The atmosphere in Realino was a mixture of rigorous constraints as well as real camaraderie, and the boarding school saw itself as a microcosm of Indonesia in which all religions were accepted. Despite the sometimes tense relations with his Jesuit brothers, up until the beginning of the 1960s Beek followed the order's vigorous defence of Pancasila which it considered to be the best path to ensuring the Catholic community's integration into Indonesian society. His vigorous anti-communism was, then, shared by all of his Jesuit colleagues. One of them, John Dijkstra, with whom he was very close at that time, had founded in 1954 several 'Pancasila unions' to counter Marxist organizations. By relying on the fifth principle of national ideology—'Social justice for the

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whole of the people of Indonesia'—he had succeeded in extending their activities far beyond the Catholic community and attracted millions of mainly Muslim members.[22]

After moving to Jakarta in 1959 where he was transferred to take over the Sodality of Our Lady, his elitist approach became more and more inflexible. Over a span of just a few years he transformed this ancient Jesuit society, which had until that point been devoted essentially to prayer and meditation, into an impressive network dedicated exclusively to the defence of the Catholic community's political interests. In the particularly tense context of the early 1960s, at a time when concern was mounting over the growing influence of PKI, Beek considered the Kongregasi Maria groups which were implanted in every parish in the country as a sort of bulwark against communist atheism. Under the cloak of an Ignatian idiom which he used to profess a desire for a 'transcendental humanism' (Soedarmanta 2008, 127), he busied himself with the recruitment and training of strong personalities who would be able to infiltrate parties, unions, and mass movements, Catholic and non-Catholic, to pursue this struggle. Beek's forceful strategy eventually provoked a debate within the order and, finding himself without any real support, he was obliged to withdraw from his position in 1961. The following year, however, the appointment of a new Jesuit provincial more favourable to his strategy allowed him to return to Jakarta and to return to his position as head of the Sodality. As a sign of his revived fortunes, he received a new appointment that matched his aspirations perfectly. He was chosen to be head of the Information Bureau (*Biro Dokumentasi*) in charge of providing social and political evaluations to the episcopate and to the Catholic party. In this new position, Beek gathered around him young Catholic activists whom he chose principally from the network he had painstakingly constructed over the preceding years (Wanandi 2012, 29–31). This select group was later to form the most important think tank of the New Order regime, the Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS). The group was led by two Chinese Indonesians, disciples of Beek: Harry Tjan Silalahi (born Tjan Tjoen Hok in 1934) who at the time was general secretary of the Catholic party and president of the Association of Catholic Students of Indonesia (*Perhimpunan Mahasiswa Katolik Republik Indonesia*, PMKRI), and Jusuf Wanandi (born Lim Bian Kie in 1937), general secretary of the PMKRI. The Information Bureau was originally charged with combing through the press on the lookout for opinion pieces on which they would provide commentaries for the church hierarchy and the Catholic party. In addition, it was required to diffuse as broadly as possible the Catholic position on various issues, in particular through a bulletin distributed to the activists of the Pancasila Front, a coalition of parties and unions which opposed the Front Nasional composed of the PKI and its allies (Soedarmanta 2008, 134–136).

[22]Relations between the two men subsequently deteriorated, when the Suharto regime, supported by Beek, limited the activities of the Pancasila unions considered too left-wing. The opposition between the two men was not only a matter of ideological differences but also of temperament. For their colleague Harry Stolk, who succeeded Beek at the head of Realino, Joop Beek was an expert in strategizing and attracted by people of power, striving, 'in a very methodical way to change society from its top' and willing to venture into darker territory to reach his objectives. Dijkstra, on the contrary, was an 'inspirer, always looking on the bright side of the street and sharing the lives of ordinary people in order to act from the ground up' (Stolk 1992).

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Beek's struggle was not only ideological, however. He was convinced that the communists were moving ineluctably to the centre of power and so he gradually transformed the Information Bureau into an intelligence agency. He carefully assembled a network of several hundred lay activists, taking care not to involve the church directly. These devoted activists were ready to operate clandestinely if the communists ever seized power; they had at their disposal hideouts equipped with typewriters and mimeographs which they could use to produce tracts and pamphlets. At last Beek had been able to find a vessel for his antipathy towards communism and an outlet for his organizational talents, obsessive secretiveness, and strict discipline. His network, far from being a simple group of activists operating in the shadows, developed genuine espionage techniques as the recruitment of a mole in the upper echelons of the Communist Party shows (Wanandi 2012, 34) and was thus ready to play a role in the looming crisis.

Anti-communist repression and the role of Father Beek's networks

On the evening of 30 September 1965, six generals and a lieutenant were captured by a group of 'progressive' officers. Three of them were killed while being arrested and their bodies were taken to the Halim air base near Jakarta where they were thrown into an abandoned well. The other officers were executed at the same base and their bodies were also thrown into a well in Lubang Buaya, a nearby suburb. That night, the putschists managed to take control of part of the capital and on the morning of 1 October, their leaders spoke on behalf of the '30th of September Movement', stating that they had acted to thwart the plans of a 'council of generals' who were preparing, with the help of the CIA, a coup d'état to overthrow President Soekarno. At this point General Suharto, who was the commander of the strategic reserve, KOSTRAD, took control of the army and placed the police and navy under his orders, thus enabling himself to quickly regain control over the entire capital (Roosa 2006). In a few short days, the putsch was quashed and the few garrisons in Central Java that had pledged allegiance to the rebels came back into line. The failed putsch provided a golden opportunity for those who had protested for years against the growth of the PKI and the increasing influence it held over the president. It sparked off a fierce ideological battle into which Father Beek threw himself and which was the prelude to one of the most atrocious massacres of the twentieth century (Cribb 1990).

The '30th of September Movement' (known for short as GESTAPU, *Gerakan Tiga Puluh September*) spawned the New Order's founding myth which justified not only General Suharto's seizure of power but also his authoritarian exercise of power until 1998. In the weeks following the failed insurrection, Beek and his team helped to draft its official narrative.[23] He drew a direct parallel between GESTAPU and the communist revolt in Madiun in 1948 and denounced the communists' 'appetency for treachery'

[23]On 8 November 1965, under Beek's supervision, a first report (Beek 1965c) was written by the Information Bureau and widely circulated among student activists and the military who fought for a ban on the Communist Party. Two years later it was enriched and extended to refute the first analyses of foreign researchers and reissued in a series of manuals which were published by the national secretariat of the *Kongregasi Maria* for the training of Catholic executives, Kasebul (see below) (Beek 1967).

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(Beek 1965c). He carefully doctored the evidence to indicate a communist conspiracy hatched over a long period, thus justifying the horrendous repression which was rained upon the PKI. He claimed that under Soekarno 'the debasement of Pancasila had reduced the national ideology to village solidarity (*gotong-rojong*), thus neglecting the fundamental principle of belief in a single God'. This appraisal highlighted the president's responsibility in the growth of communist atheism, thus justifying his replacement with Suharto.

Beek's influence lay not only in his ability to articulate cogently the ideas that would underlie the regime change. The network of activists he had carefully nurtured since the beginning of the 1960s played a key role in the organization of demonstrations which enabled the elimination of both the Communist Party and Soekarno. The Jesuits' young disciples met with General Suharto on 4 October 1965, marking the 'beginning of a close alliance which was to last for two decades' (Wanandi 2012, 48). On 8 and 9 October, Joop Beek drafted precise instructions for them concerning their alliance and their future strategy (Beek 1965a and 1965b). In late October 1965, with the encouragement of their mentor, they participated in the founding of a new organization, the Kesatuan Aksi Mahasiswa Indonesia (KAMI), which included the Muslim youth movements close to the former Masyumi as well as supporters of the Indonesian Socialist Party (Raillon 1984). The disproportionate influence that Beek's protégés enjoyed within the new organization (given their small numbers) can be seen in the fact that its new leader Cosmas Batubara was one of them and that its headquarters were established in the premises of the Association of Catholic Students (PMKRI). The youth activists and the military could without doubt be considered as brothers in arms in the fight against communism, with two of Suharto's deputies, Ali Moertopo (1924–1984) and Soejono Hoemardani (1918–1986), acting as intermediaries between the students and the military.[24] With the army's victory and the inauguration of Suharto as president in March 1968, Beek's activists drew closer to the upper echelons of power. Several of them won powerful positions in the new government party, the Golkar, in parliament and in the government.[25] Some, however, were unable to hold positions of high office on account of their Chinese origins. They, like Beek, preferred to operate in the shadows, exercising influence by providing analysis and developing strategy. In 1971, with the blessing of Suharto, Jusuf and Sofjan Wanandi founded the CSIS, based on the same model as the RAND corporation. The Wanandi brothers also became aides to Ali Moertopo and Soedjono Hoemardani who enabled the CSIS to benefit from government funds and convinced a few rich businessmen and state-owned companies to donate generously to its coffers (Wanandi 2012, 111). Although it was officially independent, the CSIS participated significantly in the elaboration of government policy up until the early 1980s. It played a prominent role in the political

[24]The links between Suharto's assistants and Beek's group date back to 1963. At a seminar dedicated to 'threats to Southeast Asia' organized by KOSTRAD, Moertopo and Hoemardani, crowned with their recent victory in Papua, publicly distanced themselves from President Soekarno's line, which pointed to the West and its neocolonialism as the main dangers for the region. Jusuf Wanandi had, on this occasion, met Ali Moertopo, which led to the emergence of a long and fruitful collaboration (Wanandi 2012, 70).

[25]Golkar was born out of the transformation of the Joint Secretariat of Functional Groups (*Sekber Golkar*), an organization founded by the military in 1964 to counter communist influence within the assembly, in which Beek's networks were already playing a role. For a detailed history of the Golkar, see Reeve 1985.

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rationalization that allowed the government to give the Golkar a hegemonic position, which it did by reducing the choice of political options for voters—apart from the Golkar—to two political parties, which in reality were merely there to provide nominal opposition to the governing party.[26]

Although Beek had no official role in the Golkar, it is difficult, once again, not to see his influence looming behind its creation. Quite apart from the presence of a number of his protégés among the party's leaders, there was the fact that the CSIS took its name from a research centre based in Georgetown University, a Jesuit institution. Beek did not content himself with a role of *éminence grise*, however. He was obsessed with perpetuating his political clout and at the end of 1966 undertook to broaden and renew his network of influence with the creation of a new training course for Catholic elites. The course was named 'Kasebul', a contraction of *kaderisasi sebulan* (one-month leadership training course) and it quickly removed itself from the control of the church when Beek created a foundation (Cipta Loka Caraka) to collect donations to finance the course.[27] Candidates selected from across the country attended these courses which were held two or three times a year in Jakarta. Apart from a few practical modules such as 'how to set up a clandestine cell' or 'how to sabotage a rally', what made the Kasebul project unique and radical was not its spiritual content (largely Ignatian in nature) but rather the methods adopted.[28] In order to ensure group cohesion and to amplify the issues dealt with, a 'mixture of Jesuit and Communist techniques allied to a generous dose of brutality' was used (Tanter 1991, 12).[29] The aim of the Kasebul project was to create a veritable web of influence across the country through the constitution of elite groups of young Catholics—future judges, military officers, businessmen, academics, and senior civil servants—who would both be faithful to Father Beek and dedicated to the defence of an authoritarian version of Pancasila, which the new regime was putting in place. By the time Beek died in 1983, more than 2,300 people had been trained. Present in 190 districts (*kapupaten*) out of the 300 that Indonesia had at the time, the cells thus formed constituted a remarkable network of influence and intelligence.[30] Many of the young Catholics trained by Kasebul joined the bodies where the new Indonesian policy was elaborated: Opsus (a secret intelligence service), the CSIS, and especially the Golkar.

This active support of the New Order was justified by Beek on two grounds. The first of these was religious. Faced with rapid population growth, Beek, out of principle, rejected any birth control policy, which meant that the only way to avoid the population sinking into poverty was healthy economic development for which 'the country needed a strong, united government supported by the army and by society through

[26]The Party for Unity and Development (PPP—Partai Persatuan Pembangunan) gathered together, as its name did not indicate, Islamic parties and organizations. The Indonesian Democratic Party (PDI—Partai Demokrasi Indonesia) included nationalist and Christian parties.

[27]Only the Provincial, which did not dare to oppose him, received his reports (kept in the Jesuit Archives of Semarang) and they were no doubt truncated.

[28]Letter of 31 March 1969 from Josephus Beek, Jakarta, to the Cardinal presiding over the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, Roma, Jesuit Archives of Semarang.

[29]At the time some of his Jesuit colleagues questioned the sadistic nature of the punishments inflicted, in particular the case of an almost naked young man whipped by Beek (Schütte 2013, 154).

[30]'Kenangan pater Josephus Beek sj', manuscript of Father Wiryono SJ, 16 October 1983, Jesuit Archives of Semarang.

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the parliament'.[31] Beek's second reason was both a more practical and a more ideological one. He intended to guarantee the protection of the Catholic minority not simply through a Catholic exegesis of Pancasila—he left that task to his Jesuit brothers who were more intellectually qualified—but also through its concrete application which would be brought about by combatting any rival interpretations. Once communism was defeated, Beek's paranoia turned to Islam whose political influence he strove to limit.

From Beek to a 'Jesuit conspiracy'

Unlike many of his Jesuit brothers and the leaders of the Catholic Party, Beek had never accepted the romantic nationalist view that Islam should be given a prominent political role providing that it proved itself to be democratic and tolerant towards minorities. Beek demonstrated an archaic form of colonial Islamophobia and he contributed to the New Order's move towards a policy of depriving Islam of any political expression, which had been implemented by the Dutch East Indies decades earlier.[32] This approach chimed with that of the military regime who refused to allow the former leaders of the now-defunct Masyumi Party to resurrect their movement. They had to confine themselves to simple religious activities and their supporters had no choice but to join the new Muslim party founded by the regime, the United Development Party (Partai Persatuan Pembangunan, PPP). Nor was the idea of an autonomous Catholic political movement one that Beek defended either. Rather, he gave precedence to an entryist strategy whereby its supporters would join the government-backed Golkar, thus sabotaging the Catholic party, much to the anger of its leaders 'who saw him as a traitor'.[33] Beek was in fact perfectly in tune with the mystical, slightly unorthodox facet of Islam known as *abangan* and embodied by General Suharto. Likewise, the hostility of the New Order's leaders towards Muslim reformism and orthodox Islam (known as *santri*) in general was not merely a question of political calculation: they found it much more amenable to surround themselves with representatives of religious minorities, in particular Christians, who were much less morally censorious towards their religious practices than the *santri*.[34] Naturally, this alliance led to rancour within the network of the now obsolete Masyumi Party who, banned from any form of political expression, turned to *dakwah* (preaching). The organization they founded as a vehicle for this new strategy, the Indonesian Islamic Propagation Council (Dewan Da'wah Islamiyah Indonesia, DDII), was to become a place where they could retreat into insularity and develop a narrative of victimhood in which Beek and the

[31]'Keterangan mengenai diri Pastor Gerardus Joseph Beek', unsigned report, Beek file, 18 June 1971, Jesuit Archives of Semarang.

[32]On this Dutch policy, see Noer (1978, 162–215).

[33]'Keterangan mengenai diri Pastor Gerardus Joseph Beek'.

[34]Thus, as Merle Ricklefs (2012, 121) points out, the maxim chosen by Suharto as a life guide for his children was inspired by the Javanese mystic synthesis and was thus absolutely unacceptable to Orthodox Muslims. As an anonymous reviewer of a previous version of this article rightly pointed out, 'another important reason for Suharto adopting several Catholic advisors is that Christians were likely to be more loyal and dependent as their followers were not numerous enough to ever threaten trouble'.

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CSIS played a prominent role.[35] The Jesuit and his followers, because of their influence at the heart of a regime that had initially marginalized political Islam, were an obvious scapegoat. Although he was relatively discredited within the Society of Jesus and the Catholic community, Beek's actions were, in the eyes of Islamists, evidence of the treachery of Catholics (and Christians in general) who were presented as the main culprits for Islam's limited place in Indonesian institutions. This emergent Islamist martyrology was inflamed by the growing number of conversions to Christianity which marked the late 1960s and early 1970s. The new regime's efforts to combat Marxism and its requirement that all Indonesians henceforth belong to one of the five recognized religions—Islam, Protestantism, Catholicism, Hinduism, and Buddhism—led hundreds of thousands to convert to Christianity, many of whom were former supporters of the PKI. These conversions and the repression against political Islam led to a hardening of doctrinal positions (Assyaukanie 2009). Masyumi leaders, who had been moderate, confident, and remarkably open-minded in the 1950s, like the majority of Islamist movements worldwide, had increasingly developed a siege mentality by the 1970s. The West, hitherto regarded as an ally against the communists, was now viewed as a threat, and there was a drastic change in tone towards the Christian community. During this period, reformist Islam in Indonesia opened up considerably to international Islamist networks, which was not without implications for its ideological development (Hefner 2000). Indonesia became a target for the rigorous Wahhabi propaganda dispensed by Saudi religious foundations. Under the influence of the literature spread by these networks, some Muslim reformists adopted a revisionist approach to the recent history of their country (Feillard and Madinier 2011, 121–125; 197–200). Pancasila was no longer seen as an opportunity but as a conspiracy hatched by a minority that had deprived the Muslim majority of its rights.

Up until the late 1980s, Beek's circle of influence, in particular the CSIS, clearly enjoyed influence within the New Order regime and was shielded from its rigid crackdown of any religious disputes. From the beginning of the 1990s, however, the hardening of anti-Christian attitudes among reformist Muslims was to be found at the very upper echelons of power. Faced with growing criticism, even within the army, of his nepotistic regime, Suharto tried to strengthen his rule by harnessing it to the Muslim revival that was sweeping the country. He tolerated and even encouraged militant Islam's return to the political scene 20 years after he had sought to banish it. The apogee of the regime's new Islamic policy came with the creation of the Association of Muslim Intellectuals (ICMI) in 1990 which conferred a quasi-official dimension to the sectarian rhetoric which had up until then remained underground and which a section of the Islamic reformist movement embraced (Hefner 1993). A 'Muslim' think-tank was founded, the Centre for Policy and Development Studies (CPDS), which was close to both the army and the radical Islamist movement and which was supposed to counteract the influence of the CSIS. It was here that Prabowo's pamphlet, mentioned in the Introduction, was composed. The weakening of government censorship allowed new press publications that allowed vitriolic forms of Islamism to emerge, a prime example being *Sabili*, a bi-monthly that had a readership of more than 100,000

[35]For a detailed analysis and examples of this victimization rhetoric towards Beek's networks, see Mujiburrahman 2006, 145–149; 166–170; 216–221.

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at the end of the 1990s. It was in this latter publication that the theory of a Christian conspiracy (in which the Jesuits played an important role) flourished. This conspiracy theory, among the many others that surrounded Suharto's fall from power, including those concerning machinations by Jews, Freemasons, and Chinese Indonesians, gained a certain amount of currency in radical publications (*Suara Hidayatullah*) but also in the conservative Muslim press (*Media Dakwah* and *Republika*, for example) (Liddle 1996; Hefner 2000, 202–203; Mietzner 1999).

Demonizing the Jesuits served two main purposes. The first of these was to remove from the leaders of the New Order regime any responsibility in a conflict henceforth presented as being above all of a religious nature. Those who defended Suharto's regime to the end and who were nostalgic for its return after his fall in 1998 had only been openly allied to radical Islam since the 1990s. Before that, they had abetted the regime's hostile policy towards political Islam for more than two decades and so subsequently needed to absolve themselves of that sin. The Jesuit conspiracy theory provided a means to do that by following a well-worn formula that enabled its expounders to eschew their responsibility. The behaviour of *abangan* Muslims towards their fellow Muslim *santri* was attributed to the malfeasance of malicious advisers with despicable ulterior motives. Christians were the main target of these accusations as they were considered to be principally responsible for the disproportionately small role given to Islam in the country's institutions relative to its demography. Among these, the prime suspects were thought to be the Catholics, and in particular the Jesuits, one of whose members, Beek, offered undeniable evidence to support such a theory in the actions and practices he used. A literalist interpretation of the Quran, which is one of the characteristics of Muslim fundamentalism, was used to confer on this biased historical reinterpretation of Pancasila a prophetic echo. An article in *Suara Hidayatullah* in 2002 evoked the perfidious role of the 'Jesuit brigades' (Razak and Rustamaji 2002) and recalled Verse 118 of the Al-Imran Surah:

> O you who have believed, do not take as intimates those other than yourselves, for they will not spare you [any] ruin. They wish you would have hardship. Hatred has already appeared from their mouths, and what their breasts conceal is greater. We have certainly made clear to you the signs, if you will use reason.

The second purpose of this 'Jesuit conspiracy' was to dramatize the stakes of the struggle to give Islam an equitable role in the country's institutions by placing it within the framework of a worldwide struggle between Islam and Christianity which had been going on since the Crusades. Presented as heirs to Dutch colonization and its alleged project to Christianize Indonesia, Beek and the CSIS provided historical continuity to a martyrological narrative that nowadays surrounds the ultimate confrontation between the two civilizations.[36] By successive expansions Beek and the CSIS were (and still are) often cited as proof of the duplicity of the Jesuits, the Catholics, and the entire

[36]See, as examples of the construction of this narrative: Ghazwul Fikr, CSIS, 'Soeharto dan Kelompok Islam', *hidayatullah*.com, 27 January 2014, https://www.hidayatullah.com/artikel/ghazwul-fikr/read/2014/01/27/15542/amien-rais-dan-indonesia-2.html, [accessed 19 August 2022] and Adian Husaini, 'Mengkristenkan Jawa', *hidayatullah*.com, 4 April 2013, https://www.hidayatullah.com/kolom/catatan-akhir-pekan/read/2013/04/04/3865/mengkristenkan-jawa.html, [accessed 19 August 2022].

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Christian community in hiding their desire to destroy Islam behind the mask of evangelical love and charity.[37] The accumulation of various conspiracy theories left many Indonesian Muslims plunged into a binary world where the combat between good and evil embodied itself as a struggle between Islam and the West, the latter of course having its henchmen in the shape of Jesuits, Jews, and Freemasons who had cunningly infiltrated the country's institutions. The irony behind these conspiracy theories is that those who attempted to spread them in order to denounce the nefarious influence of Western agents often recycled old versions of the same theses that had originated in medieval Europe and were largely diffused during the nineteenth century (Leroy 1992), such as that used by a book on 'international Jewish networks in the archipelago' which asserted that the Society of Jesus had as its motto 'Faith, Gold and Power' (Artawijaya 2010, 236).[38] This theory of a Jesuit conspiracy had dramatic consequences at the turn of the millennium. The image that many radical Muslims had of their Christian compatriots began to change from one of dishonest rivals during the 1970s and 1980s to that of active participants in a vast plot designed to annihilate Islam. Their influence could now be considered as the object of a holy war which was a continuation of an age-old struggle, described above. This was the case in the Moluccas which was ravaged by interdenominational conflict between 1999 and 2002 (Van Klinken 2003).

The Beek affair was particularly difficult for the Society of Jesus given that the majority of its members had committed themselves from the late 1960s to working towards tolerance and democracy, faithful to the original spirit of Pancasila. Within the Society, Beek was criticized and marginalized very early on. Indeed, in March 1972, after a visit by the Jesuit superior-general and a thorough enquiry into his activities within the Kasebul, he was asked to leave Indonesia. He still enjoyed the support of President Suharto, however, and threatened to reveal to the media the real reasons for his removal, warning his superiors of 'the reactions which it would provoke, particularly in government circles'.[39] His immediate superior, the Jesuit provincial, eventually gave in to his demands and authorized his return, apparently against the wishes of the superior-general. Although he had been relieved of some of his responsibilities, Beek resumed his clandestine activities, much to the frustration of his brothers involved in the Islamo-Christian dialogue who could see the mounting danger of a backlash against Christians. One of the country's most eminent Jesuits, Franz Magnis-Suseno (SJ), warned in 1978 that falsified documents in circulation were evoking a plot hatched by Beek.[40] It was supposedly aimed at entrenching Ali Murtopo's influence within the New Order regime by eliminating his rivals with a view to preparing for the

[37]See, for example, '*Kristenisasi Jilid Dua*' (Christianisation, Chapter 2), in *Sabili*, 28 July 1999; Adian Husaini, 'Teror kata Berkedok "Kasih"' (The Terror of Speech Using the Mask of 'Love'), July 2003, http://www.hidayatullah.com, [accessed 19 August 2022].

[38]Instead of *Ad maiorem Dei gloriam* ('For the greater glory of God').

[39]Letter from Beek to the Superior General of the Society of Jesus, 23 October 1972, Baltimore, Maryland, Jesuit Archives of Semarang.

[40]Entitled 'Minutes of the meeting held at CSIS on May 4, 1978', the document to which Magnis-Suseno was referring, a copy of which is in the Jesuit Archives in Semarang, was evidently a forgery. It recounted a conversation evoking an imminent coup d'état by a small group consisting of Ali Moertopo, CSIS leaders, and Beek. It revealed that both the Protestants of the DGI and the Catholics of the MAWI supported this plot, the first step of which was to eliminate the political leaders and high-ranking officers likely to oppose it.

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Christianization of Indonesia. Years before the Jesuit conspiracy theory was diffused by the Islamist press, then, Magnis-Suseno had uncovered its mechanisms, which were already at work. This process was founded on the concrete actions carried out by Beek to build a biased and ominous outlook, implicating not just the Society and the Catholic church but the entire Christian community. Magnis-Suseno declared that he was 'horrified that his community was being associated with Beek's actions' and that Beek was now 'the symbolic figure of all anti-Christian suspicions in Indonesia'; he warned of the risk of seeing 'these suspicions transformed into action' through manipulations that would certainly accompany the struggle for power in the post-Suharto era.[41]

Beek's death in 1983 coincided with the height of the influence of his Catholic network at the top echelons of the state. The appointment, a few months earlier, of General Benny Moerdani as chief of staff of the Armed Forces had been a striking demonstration of this. The only Catholic to have ever held such a prestigious position, he symbolized the alliance between Christians and *abangan* Muslims initiated by the collaboration between his mentor Ali Moertopo and Beek's followers. For Suharto, however, this cooperation was purely contingent and he did not hesitate to break it when it no longer benefitted him. A few years after his appointment, outraged by the Suharto family's growing stranglehold on the economy, Benny Moerdani led a movement within the army that tried, unsuccessfully, to impose his choice for the vice-presidency in the 1988 elections. The episode helped to convince Suharto to seek new support to compensate for the army's failure. He then approached the representatives of political Islam, who had been marginalized until then, and ceased all collaboration with the CSIS. Not only did the influence of Beek's former networks decline drastically, but they became the expiatory victims of this reversal, marked by the creation of ICMI and CPDS in 1990.

Conclusion

The history of the Jesuits' contribution to Indonesia's religious policy intersects with several other histories. First, it converges with the history of the Javanese, and later Indonesian, principle that had slowly ripened to take pride of place in Pancasila as the enshrinement of a multidenominational model echoing the development of the Catholic notion of inculturation. It was thus perfectly able to adapt to the slow blossoming of Indonesian nationalism and enabled the coming together of the Jesuits and the political representatives of the *abangan* form of Islam which had inherited a long tradition of Javanese spirituality. Relations with Muslim reformists were, however, as was the case elsewhere, more problematic. When democracy and communism had both disappeared from the country, these two marginal and irreconcilable traditions came into conflict, turning the question of religious identity into an explosive battleground. The first of these traditions was personified by Beek, a post-colonial offshoot of Catholic integralism, imbued with the idea of an organic state and the visceral rejection of any class conflict, in line with the principles laid out in the *Rerum Novarum* encyclical of 1891. Its undeniable success in the middle of the profound crisis which rocked the country in 1965 was due to its alliance with the revival

[41]Letter from Franz von Magnis to the Provincial, Girisonta, 15 August 1978, Jesuit Archives of Semarang.

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of a quest for harmony through a hierarchical society, born in the Javanese nobility which had produced the mystic synthesis.[42] Although it was marginalized during the period of parliamentary democracy, its conception of government already underpinned Soekarno's guided democracy and it was later taken up by the New Order which gave it a fiercely anti-communist, pro-Western flavour that was hostile to Islam. In response to this alliance, a section of the Indonesian Muslim reformist movement became more and more amenable to a radical Islamic form of martyrology which had emerged out of the sense of disenchantment with independence in numerous Muslim countries. This radical Islamic movement was often the subject of repression by regimes allied to Western powers and it gradually wove a narrative that acted as a vehicle for anti-globalization symbolism. This was the context within which the Jesuit conspiracy progressively emerged. In the Society of Jesus, Beek's programme expired after his death, and after a period of controversy concerning his actions, a frank and fruitful dialogue between the Jesuits and the leaders of the major Muslim organizations resumed in more serene conditions. Within the Society of Jesus, the leading figure in this renewed dialogue is unquestionably Franz Magnis-Suseno. Close to Abdurrahman Wahid (1940–2009), former leader of the Nahdlatul Ulama and president of the Republic between 1999 and 2001, he participated with him in the foundation of the Demokrasi Forum (Democracy Forum, FORDEM) in 1991, which denounced the political instrumentalization of Islam by the New Order that had just created the ICMI (Latief 2012, 119). A respected figure in the Indonesian intellectual debate and a great defender of Indonesian nationalism based on Pancasila and religious tolerance (Magnis-Suseno 2021), he also maintained close ties with Ahmad Syafi'i Maarif (born in 1935, former president of the Muhammadiyah), with whom he regularly organizes press conferences to oppose the demands of radical Islamists and denounce politicians for their failure to defend pluralism.[43] This commitment of the Jesuits contributes (along with representatives of other religious minorities) to the multiconfessional nature of the struggle for the preservation of Pancasila as the foundation of the Indonesian state, in opposition to those who wish to subordinate it to Islamic norms (Raillon 2011). Because of its overwhelming majority, the outcome of this struggle will, of course, be played out within the Muslim community itself, with, on the one hand, those who claim the universality of a rigorist Islam inspired by the Salafist currents of the Middle East and, on the other hand, the partisans of more open interpretations, attentive to the spiritual history of the Archipelago (in particular, its mystical synthesis). It is therefore understandable why, in order to discredit their opponents, supporters of fundamentalist Islam, as well as those who manipulate it for political purposes, dig up the spectre of Beek from the past.

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[42] Theorized by Ki Hadjar Dewantara (1889–1959) in the 1920s with the 'family principle' (*kekeluargan*) of the state and by Raden Soepomo (1903–1958) with the debates at the Committee for Preparatory Work for Independence, this movement proposed the establishment of a benign, paternalist regime. See Bertrand (2005, 559–571).

[43] Syafi'i Maarif (2018, 67) writes: 'My friend Franz Magnis-Suseno was born in Germany; in defending Indonesia as his home, he can outdo the loyalty of native-born Muslims.'

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